GS 281

General Synod

The Theology of Ordination

A Report by
The Faith and Order Advisory Group
of The Board for Mission and Unity

THE FAITH AND ORDER ADVISORY GROUP

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INTRODUCTION

1. In July 1974, the Group presented to the General Synod, meeting at York, an Interim Paper entitled *The Theology of Ordination and the Integration of Ministries* (GS 212). The manifold genesis of that document was set out in its first four paragraphs which are reprinted as Appendix 1 to the present Report. As will be seen there the members of the Group were anxious to emphasise the interim nature of the document, and at a number of places in the Paper it was stated that the Group intended to do more work on certain aspects of the subject. In the intervening year the members of the group have continued their discussions, though illness and the call of other duties have prevented as full an attendance at meetings as was desirable. Nevertheless we have been able to make an extensive revision and enlargement of our previous paper at a number of points and now present this Report on those parts of the subject which may be comprehended under the head of *The Theology of Ordination.* It is our intention to produce a separate Report, later in the year, on the subject of *The Integration of Ministries.*

2. We are very conscious of the limitations of what we have been able to do and very much aware that if we had been a group of people who had no other calls upon their time we might have been able to put before the Synod a much fuller and weightier study of the subject. We are also aware of our limitations in respect of the sociological and psychological factors referred to in Canon Welsby's motion, but so was the Standing Committee when it referred that motion in the first instance to us, and no doubt that Committee will, if it thinks necessary, supplement our Report by reference to experts in those fields.

3. We have in the main followed the plan laid out in the Interim Paper and it will be observed that in a number of places we have incorporated sections of that Paper.[1] This seemed more convenient than burdening the pages with a large number of quotations from the original document. Those who compare the two will notice that a main difference is in the treatment of the New Testament. As we have discussed this part of the subject, we have become increasingly aware of the difficulty of presenting any statements about the ministry in the New Testament on which we could all agree and which would be helpful to the members of the Synod. Reasons for this are given in paragraph 12 and in Appendix 2, but the fact that we have not repeated the whole of paragraphs 13 to 20 of GS 212[2] is not to be taken as a repudiation by the Group of what is said there.

[1] For paragraphs 4-11, 21-23, 26, 32-34, 45, 46, 51 *cf.* GS 212, paras 5-12, 24-28, 30-32, 35, 37.
[2] See pp. 30-32 *infra.*

I. THE CONTEXT OF MINISTRY

4. Since every point of Christian doctrine implicitly involves all the rest, a discussion about the theology of ordination requires the context of a theology of the ministry, which requires the context of a theology of the Church, which in turn requires a theology of creation and redemption. As we are not embarking on a *Summa Theologica* we must state only very briefly certain presuppositions on which our paper will proceed.

5. The created universe is the product of God's love and the purpose of its existence is to glorify God by enjoying and responding to that love. Because of human rejection of God's love the Father sent the Son into the world to show once again his love and to bring men back to the knowledge of him. Those who believe in Christ have been gathered by him into a community of the redeemed which is the Church. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent upon the Church to be the spirit of life, of holiness, of unity and of truth. In the power of the Spirit the Church was sent out to bring the healing of Christ to the nations. The divine mission continues in every age. Men respond to Christ's call, they are gathered together, the Spirit moves among them, the good news is shown to mankind in the word of truth and in service.

6. Christ gave to his Church two signs through which the Spirit inaugurates and renews the redeemed life of Christians. Baptism is the sacrament of incorporation into the redeemed community. The eucharist is a memorial of the totality of God's reconciling action in Christ, the focus of the Church's unity, and the renewal of its redeemed life for the fulfilment of its mission.[1] Christ has made his people 'kings and priests unto God and his Father' (Rev. 1.6) so that all the baptised form a royal priesthood consecrated to God's service in worship and in mission. The centre of their worship is the eucharist in which they offer themselves in thanksgiving in union with Christ and intercede for the world, and from which they carry the vision and the strength to show God's love and serve human need in all its forms. The Church proclaims God to the world and intercedes for the world to God.

7. Within the Church therefore every member has his own calling, or as the Good Friday collect puts it 'his vocation and ministry'. The ministry of the head continues to and through the members of his body, so that mutual service in love is to be understood as Christ's own authentic life in his members. Christians are sealed, indwelt and gifted by the Holy Spirit to act as organs of Christ's continuing ministry to human need. Spiritual gifts are capacities to serve others in such a way that what is said or done expresses and communicates the grace of Christ, so building up both the person ministering and the whole body. In this sense the

[1] *Ministry and Ordination*, paras. 12 and 13.

Church is a charismatic community in which all serve by the power of the Holy Spirit. The lists in Rom. 12. 4-8 and I Cor. 12. 28-30 show that the category of spiritual gifts includes many different modes of speech and action, and there is no reason to regard these lists as exhaustive.

8. For many, perhaps the majority of Christians, their ministry is exercised in living the Christian life in their family and in their job, and in witnessing by the quality of their life and their work, and by speech when occasion offers. All this is focused in and derives from their regular worship as members of the Christian community. For some Christians it is the exercise of particular gifts, such as healing, teaching, prophecy, social care and certain kinds of evangelism. For others their ministry may be in whole or in part in some particular office for which they have been specially trained and commissioned by the Church such as deaconesses, readers, evangelists, licensed lay workers. For some their ministry is a calling to serve in a community under rule and vows.

9. But alongside all these forms of ministry the Christian Churches as a whole, and with only one or two notable exceptions such as the Quakers, have from very early times recognised the existence of what the Report *Doctrine in the Church of England* calls 'a distinctive ministry'. By that term is understood a ministry of the word and sacraments which in varying ways serves the Church and through it the whole human community in mission, in teaching, in pastoral care and promotion of fellowship and unity. This ministry is potentially universal, for it is not in principle simply the ministry of one part of the Church, but carries with it, in intention, authority to minister in the whole Church by formal appointment in ordination. The special function of the 'distinctive ministry' is to minister to men the mystery of God.

10. From the second or third century until the sixteenth this 'distinctive ministry' existed apparently universally in the Church in the form of the threefold ministry of bishops, priests (presbyters) and deacons, and has been maintained in that form by some three-quarters of Christendom since then. In maintaining it the Church of England stands with the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox and non-Chalcedonian Eastern Churches, the Old Catholic Churches and the United Churches of North and South India and Pakistan. Most of the Protestant Churches have provided that the main functions of the historic threefold ministry be exercised by the members of a single ministry acting in certain matters individually and in others collectively. In some of these Churches this single ministry has been supplemented by a ministry of deacons varyingly understood.

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT

11. The Doctrine Report says that 'the New Testament bears witness to the principle of a distinctive ministry, as an original element, but not

the sole constitutive element, in the life of the Church' (p. 115). There are a number of problems and difficulties in the way of consulting the New Testament on the subject of ministry and ordination. Perhaps the chief is that in respect of this matter, as of some others, the authors of the documents which form the New Testament were not writing to answer the questions that we, nearly two thousand years later, ask. But we have also to take account of the difficulty of establishing with any certainty an historical development within the New Testament itself in spite of the fact that its contents cover a period of at least two generations. This difficulty arises from the diversity of views among scholars about the dating and historicity of the various documents, from the fact that a later work may reflect an older practice, and from the fact that the documents were written from a diversity of points of view and circumstances so that silence is of little significance. Account has also to be taken of the fact that different titles can cover the same functions and the same title be applied to differing functions.

12. The existence of such differing and often contradictory views of reputable scholars, even concerning apparently straightforward New Testament evidence on the subject of ministry, makes it hazardous to attempt general conclusions. We have therefore preferred to attach to this Paper an appendix which both illustrates the diversity of scholarly opinion on certain topics and also outlines the difficulties met by anyone trying to relate the New Testament directly to the present day ministry (Appendix 2).

III. PRIESTLY MINISTRY

13. The fundamental Christian ministry is that of Christ himself. His self-emptying and self-offering alone reconcile the world to God, and there can be no Christian ministry or mediation apart from him.

14. Yet he chooses to involve men in his work of reconciliation (John 17. 18f; 20.21; *cf* I Cor. 3.9). From the time of St Paul, the Church has understood itself to be blessed by certain spiritual gifts or graces (charismata) which are not all given to all Christians, nor are they the private possessions of those who receive them: rather are they graces given to certain individuals to be exercised to the benefit of all (*cf* e.g. I Cor. 12).

15. As the early Church (for whatever reasons) became more concerned with its own organisation, it significantly re-emphasised the fact of ministry being the gift of Christ or of his Spirit, bestowed upon those whom he had chosen. *Cf* Eph. 4.7-11 (a more 'institutional' list than I Cor. 12); I Tim. 4.14; II Tim. 1.6; I Clement 42-44. None of the books in the New Testament uses explicitly sacerdotal language of the ministry,

but Hippolytus (c AD 200) uses it of the work of the bishop: he is 'to feed thy flock and serve as thine high priest (αρχιερατευειν). The subsequent development of this terminology for the ministry of bishops and presbyters is well known, being the result partly of the influence of Old Testament types and partly of an association with the priestly role of Christ. The sixteenth century reformers consciously rejected this sacerdotal language, but they in no way relinquished their belief in a distinctive ministry. Thus the Second Helvetic Confession (1556) says, 'The priesthood and the ministry are very different from one another . . . For the Lord himself did not appoint any priests . . . but ministers who may preach and administer the sacraments'. (Ch. 18).[1] These historical texts may be compared with two modern statements from different ecclesiastical traditions:

> 'Presbyters . . . are consecrated to preach the Gospel, shepherd the faithful and celebrate the divine worship as the true priests (sacerdotes) of the new Covenant.' (*Lumen Gentium*, para. 28).[2]
>
> 'The essential and specific function of the special ministry is: to assemble and build up the Christian community, by proclaiming and teaching the word of God, and presiding over the liturgical and sacramental life of the eucharistic community.' (*The Ordained Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective*, para. 15).[3]

These quotations suggest there is a real danger of our being imprisoned by words. When titles such as priest and minister are 'unpacked' they are found to represent very similar ideas of a distinctive aspect of the life of the Church. Put in another way, if there is a distinctive ministry, then primitive Christianity, the sixteenth century reformers and the main strands of Christian theology today seem to be in substantial agreement about the basic essentials of it.

16. A related problem derives from the overstressing of sacerdotal language in relation to the ministry. This has led on the one hand to complications over the nature of 'sacrifice' etc., and on the other to a dubious linking together—through the catchword 'priest'—of themes which have no original connection. For example, the readers of I Peter are told, 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation'. The contexts of this text, of Exodus 19.6 (from which it is quoted) and of related passages in Revelation all emphasise the *corporate* nature of the concept here involved. The true Israel is a priestly *body* in that it enlightens the world concerning God; the Christian interpretation will include the sense in which, because the Church is the Body of Christ, this corporate priesthood is derived from Christ. But this is not to be confused with the distinctive charismata associated with the ministry which, as was seen above, are bestowed upon *individuals*.

[1] *Reformed Confessions*, pp. 271-2.
[2] *Documents of Vatican II*, p. 53.
[3] *Modern Ecumenical Documents on the Ministry*, p. 33.

17. Three elements in the traditional Christian use of the language of priesthood are thus discernible:

(i) The unique priesthood of Christ himself.

(ii) The corporate priesthood of the whole Church.

(iii) The priesthood of those ordained to the proclamation of the word, the administration of the sacraments and the pastoral care of the faithful.

While it is true that ministers of word and sacrament are not excluded from the corporate priesthood, and that all Christian priesthood must derive from Christ, it is not possible to equate these three elements nor even to move without great care from speaking of one to speaking of another. While Christian piety has used these elements to enrich each other, it is necessary theologically to keep them distinct.

18. The priestly ministry is one of service, following both the precept (Mark 10. 42-45) and example (John 13. 4ff) of Christ. In both these passages and elsewhere in the New Testament the idea of service is closely connected with that of authority, and it is important that these two are interpreted together. Christian service is no mere servility but an openness to be used by God and his people, and when a minister is genuinely open to God's will, then something of the divine authority will be perceptible (*cf.* Luke 7. 6ff; I Cor. 16. 15f). Equally, the exercise of the authority is dependent upon the life of Christian service, through which the gifts of God are mediated.

19. Since the concept of ministerial authority gives rise to certain misgivings and misunderstandings, it is worth distinguishing three sets of circumstances in which this authority is recognised:

(i) In the case of individuals there is an authority inherent in the personality which is moulded by a life lived in the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is found in all Christians to a greater or lesser extent, and by no means to a greater degree in clergy than in laity.

(ii) The local Christian community recognises an authority in a minister when he is licensed to a particular work by the bishop and accepted in that capacity by his fellow Christians. This aspect of authority is shared by the minister with licensed lay workers, and in some ways with churchwardens and other leaders of the local church.

(iii) In ordination to the priestly ministry it is the universal Church which (at least potentially) acknowledges that God gives to this particular person this particular gift of authoritative service to be used for the good of his people.

20. As the term authority is viewed with suspicion in some quarters today it must be emphasised that all three kinds of authority referred to are of the nature of moral rather than simply coercive authority, and that in each set of circumstances the authority in question is given or delegated

by God for the benefit of the Church. It is not a personal possession to be used as the individual holder of it wills, but only within the framework provided by the Christian community.

IV. APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

21. At this point we may quote again from the Doctrine Report. 'The Ministry, then, is to be regarded as an original and essential element in the Church. We must remember that in an historical process of growth the appearance of formality is often increased in retrospect, and we must beware of reading back into the earliest period the systematic organisation of later times. St Paul was called to the Apostolate by a special revelation: James, the brother of the Lord, who presided over the Church in Jerusalem, was not one of the Twelve; the position of Barnabas does not fit easily into a clear-cut scheme. But a distinction corresponding to that drawn later between clergy and laity—*kleros* and *laos*—is there from the outset. In the same way, whether or not the succession of the Ministry as known from (at latest) the end of the second century can be traced through all its stages to the Apostles, yet the Ministry exists in succession to the original Apostolate. The Ministry does not exist apart from the Body, nor the Body apart from the Ministry. But Christ, in drawing men to Himself, unites them in a fellowship of which the Apostolate, which He appointed, and the Ministry, which is its successor, are ministerial organs. The commission to exercise Ministry is bestowed through those who already hold it, but it comes from the Risen, Reigning, and Present Lord Himself' (pp. 115, 116).

22. The French Roman Catholic and Protestant Group of Les Dombes expounds the apostolicity of the ministry in another way, nonetheless valuable:

> '9. The whole Church, summoned by Christ, is sent to summon all men to the eschatological assembly of salvation. This means that the whole Church has a mission and therefore a ministry. So that the Church may fulfil this mission, Christ has given it, in the person of the apostles, the ministerial sign that it is he who is calling. This is why the apostolic character of the Church comprises two inseparable aspects:
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> 10. The apostolicity of the Church is founded on Christ's fidelity to his promise to be always with his people and on the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, who is building it up day by day. There is, therefore, an apostolic succession, of the whole Church.
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> 11. But within that apostolic succession, Christ, in order to manifest his initiative of grace, to guarantee the transcendence of the apostolic message, and to ensure the fulfilment of the Church's mission, sent his apostles as his envoys, thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the wake of the apostles, the apostolic ministry is still being carried on in

the Church on the foundation which they constituted and it must remain entirely faithful to the message they have transmitted. This ministry—a gift of God for the service of the whole Church—forms part of the Church's structure. There is, therefore, an apostolic succession in the ministry instituted by our Lord.

12. The fullness of the apostolic succession of the whole Church implies continuity in the essential features of the Church of the apostles: witness to the faith, fraternal communion, sacramental life, service of mankind, dialogue with the world, and the sharing of the gifts which God has given to each member.

13. The fullness of the apostolic succession in the ministry implies continuity in the transmission of the ministerial function, fidelity in preaching to the teaching of the apostles, and a life in keeping with the Gospel and the demands of mission. These three features are usually inseparable.

This succession, in fact, as a ministerial sign, bears witness to the apostolic character of the Church and prepares the community for the coming and the action of our Lord himself.'[1]

23. The ministry is part of the outward expression of the apostolicity of the Church and therefore it is both entered within the context of the local community and also with the participation of those who are already ministers. This is ordination. As the ARCIC statement says:

'Ordination denotes entry into this apostolic and God-given ministry, which serves and signifies the unity of the local churches in themselves and with one another. Every individual ordination is therefore an expression of the continuing apostolicity and catholicity of the whole Church' (para. 14).[2]

24. The WCC document quoted above (Section III) treats the question of apostolic succession with caution, noting that there have recently been new insights into the historical problem which 'together with a more comprehensive understanding of the apostolicity of the Church and the means of its preservation and actualisation, have led to certain modifications of previously held positions' (para. 33).[3] After indicating some of these changes the document states that 'More and more churches, including those in church union negotiations, are expressing willingness to see episcopacy as a pre-eminent sign of the apostolic succession of the whole Church in faith, life and doctrine, and as such, something that ought to be striven for if absent' (para. 37).[4]

[1] *Modern Ecumenical Documents*, pp. 95, 96.
[2] *ibid.* p. 35.
[3] *ibid.* p. 120.
[4] *ibid.* p. 121.

V. ORDINATION

25. Before discussing the three so-called 'Holy Orders' and the variety of other ministries that exist in the Church today we think it important to say something about the nature of ordination.

26. In ordination there are to be discerned a number of distinct elements. First there is the choice by the Church of the person to be ordained. Second, there is the presentation of the person chosen to those who themselves, already holding the ministerial commission, are the ordaining ministers. Third, there is the prayer of these ministers for the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable the person presented to perform the office to which he is being ordained. In so praying they receive him into the ministerial college of which they themselves are members and hand on to him the ministerial commission, the outward sign of all this being the laying on of hands. This action of laying on hands does not have a particular significance of its own: it is given meaning by the occasion and the words accompanying it (e.g. at Acts 13. 3 it is a commendation for a particular task; at Matt. 19. 15 it is an action of blessing and reception). On the part of the candidate there is his acceptance of ordination, his submission to the divine will as manifested in the call to service in this particular order of ministry, and his engagement of himself to the ministry entrusted to him. Re-ordination to an order to which a person has already been ordained is generally regarded as unallowable.

27. We believe these statements would be acceptable within the main Christian traditions of this country. Divergences of view begin to appear however when the nature of the ministerial status required in the ordaining ministers is discussed. Some traditions teach that the status must be that of a bishop in the historic succession, some that it requires membership of a presbytery in which presbyteral succession has been maintained, some that while an element of ministerial succession is desirable it is not strictly necessary.

28. Within the order and economy of the Church, the ordained minister is distinct in that he has received a special call, has taken on a special responsibility and has been given in ordination a special grace to strengthen him. This ministerial distinctness has frequently been termed 'character'. As with the term authority, ministerial character is a phrase which needs exploring a little if misunderstandings are to be avoided. In origin the word has an impersonal meaning: it is an indelible seal, by which the ministry of word and sacrament is guaranteed despite the personal unworthiness of the minister. Alongside this has grown up a more personal sense to the word, relating to the moral rectitude and general quality of life displayed by an individual. There is clearly a danger of confusion here since the (impersonal) character of the first case is expressly distinct from the (personal) character of the second. While wishing for a clearer

terminology, we need to speak of this matter on account of two important truths which ought to be expressed, but are more commonly obscured, by the phrase ministerial character:

(i) It is the responsibility of the minister 'to frame and fashion his life acording to the Doctrine of Christ, and to make himself, as much as in him lieth, a wholesome example of (and to) the flock of Christ'. (*cf.* the examination of Deacons and Priests in the Ordinal).

(ii) If however a minister falls short of this ideal in his personal life, yet 'we may use his ministry, both in hearing the word of God and in the receiving of the Sacraments, neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by his wickedness'. (*cf.* Article 26).

Related to this last matter is the question of the life-long nature of the ministry. At his ordination a minister is set in a special relationship to the Church as a whole, and this is a permanent relationship. He will also be licensed to exercise his ministry in a particular locality and within certain limits, thus giving expression in the local community to this special relationship. This local expression of his ministry is not permanent, and the licensing to it is to be clearly distinguished from ordination.

29. This distinction is of particular importance in relation to current discussions about 'local ministries' and 'temporary ordinations'. There have always been in the Church ordained men whose ministry was exercised for life within a fairly limited locality and who could scarcely be conceived as exercising it outside that locality. This was probably the case with the majority of ministers in the first centuries of the Church's history. It may still be the case with some of the village clergy in parts of Europe and the Orthodox East, who nevertheless within their locality represent the universal Church.

30. It is not so easy to produce examples of ordination in circumstances where it was understood that a man might be able to exercise his ministry only for a short time. If it is suggested that a man can be ordained and then after a few years be regarded as not ordained, in such wise that if he is to resume his ministry he needs to be ordained again—this would be inconsistent with the whole view of ordination as set out in the earlier paragraphs of this section. Some anomalies are inescapable in this as in other areas of the life of the Church. But it is less anomalous to envisage the continuation of ordination without a licence than it is to envisage the withering away or termination of the priesthood into which a man has been ordained. It does not seem inconsistent with what has already been said if a man is ordained to exercise the (potentially) universal ministry in a given situation, with the knowledge that a change of secular employment may remove him from that situation, provided that it is accepted that his special relationship to the Church as a whole, established in his ordination, is permanent and has its place in his spiritual outlook, and that when occasion offers he will resume the practical expression of his ministry.

VI. THE THREE-FOLD MINISTRY

31. At this point in our Interim Paper we offered some further comments on the history of the three orders. We now present a revised and extended version of those comments.

32. The ethos of episcopacy has varied through the centuries for there has been a tendency in every age to assimilate the life-style of top people in the Church to that of top people in secular life. Senatorial, baronial, aristocratic and managerial patterns have all made their mark upon the office of a bishop. The functioning of bishops has at various times and places been limited by the subordination to the Pope or other bishops, to synods, to abbots or to the State. It is all the more remarkable therefore that from the second century to the twentieth a fairly consistent theology of episcopacy has been maintained by those Churches which have kept the three-fold ministry; a theology sufficiently consistent for it to be possible to describe certain practices (such as the Celtic subordination of bishops to abbots or the tendency in some quarters to treat episcopacy as a rank rather than an order with responsibilities and functions) as aberrations. Part of this theology of episcopacy has already been stated in relation to apostolic succession in the ministry, and we remind our readers particularly of the quotation from the WCC document *The Ordained Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective* given in paragraph 24 above.

33. The Ordinal composed in connection with the Anglican-Methodist Scheme of Union contains a statement of the duties of a bishop which carried the assent of Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologians as well as Anglican and Methodists and is an explication in more detailed terms of the theology of episcopacy:

> 'A Bishop is called to be a Chief Minister and Chief Pastor and, with other Bishops, to be also a guardian of the faith, the unity, and the discipline which are common to the whole Church, and an overseer of her mission throughout the world. It is his duty to watch over and protect the congregations committed to his charge and therein to teach and to govern after the example of the Apostles of the Lord. He is to lead and guide the Presbyters and Deacons under his care and to be faithful in ordaining and sending new ministers. A Bishop must, therefore, know his people and be known by them; he must proclaim and interpret Christ's Gospel to them: and lead them in the offering of spiritual sacrifice and prayer. He must take care for the due ministering of God's Word and Sacraments; he must also be diligent in confirming the baptised and whenever it shall be required of him, in administering discipline according to God's holy Word.'[1]

[1] *Anglican-Methodist Ordinal*, pp. 30-31.

34. This ecumenical understanding of the theology of episcopacy, as it might fairly be called, has throughout the centuries given a fairly clearly defined place to the bishop in the Church, and where the limits of this definition have been exceeded, difficulties and discontents have usually resulted, and sometimes schism.

35. Just as the ethos of the episcopate has varied through the centuries, so there has been a great variety of contexts in which the presbyterate has been exercised. Not only is there a contrast between the functions of presbyters in the first centuries and those who in later times were sent out as deputies of the bishops in mission and pastoral care (parish priests), but in every age presbyters have been used to meet the specialised needs of the time. In England the long tradition of priest-schoolmasters from the middle ages to the present time is an outstanding example of specialisation. The non-stipendiary ministry in the Church of England today has many precedents, for the presbyterate has often been a calling exercised by those who earned their living in some other occupation; but its increasing importance within the parochial system has made it the occasion of a wide-spread re-assessment of what are the 'constants' of the order which ought always to be present. This concerns constants in spiritual dedication, in function and in training, and no simple list of these can be given. There is however one conclusion to which studies which have been made in this area tend: However wide the variety of work undertaken by presbyters in the exercise of their ministry, it is a *single* ministry in which they all share. There can be no question of gradations within the presbyterate: all receive the same commission at their ordination, and this is unaffected by the particular work upon which the minister is subsequently engaged, whether parochial or non-parochial, stipendiary or non-stipendiary.[1]

36. The place of the diaconate is also being widely discussed at the present time (*cf.* the ACCM report *Deacons in the Church,* 1974). Questions raised include:

What is the distinctiveness of the diaconal ministry?
What is the distinction between, and relationship of, diaconal and liturgical roles in ministry?
Is the diaconate concerned primarily with ministry within the Church or with the Church's ministry to the world?
Can the diaconate be identified with the existing servant ministries?
Is the diaconate a lay or clerical ministry?

Whether or not the diaconate is a proper subject for a paper on the Theology of Ordination depends upon the answer to this last question, but it has to be raised because officially the Church of England regards the diaconate as a Holy Order, and a deacon as a clergyman.

[1] *Cf.* Appendix 3, Guildford Report, and *Varieties of Ministry* (Scottish Episcopal Church Report); also *Le Ministère et les ministères selon le Nouveau Testament,* ed. J. Delorme.

37. The ACCM report recommends that the Church of England discontinues the diaconate, largely on the grounds that its existence obscures the true nature of the 'lay ministry':

> 'We hope that the abolition of an anomaly (sc. the diaconate) will result in lay people having a clearer picture of their role and work in the Church. When lay people have a clearer picture of the diaconal responsibilities which are theirs as members of the Church, we expect that their diaconal work will be strengthened and developed. It may also happen that a clearer picture of the work and functions of the ordained minister will also emerge.' (p. 24).

38. We recognize that the present Anglican use of the diaconate is open to criticism, but we think that certain factors which we outline below need to be borne in mind.

39. One by-product of tying the concept of priestly ministry too closely to the presbyterate is that the Church has obscured the very real sense in which the diaconate shares theologically and pastorally in this ministry. The deacon may indeed perform only those functions which an authorised layman may also perform, but he undertakes them with the particular ministerial authority, character, responsibility and commitment which were discussed above (sections III and V). It is true that there are certain presbyteral functions which a deacon may not perform, just as there are certain episcopal functions which a presbyter may not perform, but it is nonetheless a single priestly ministry in which all three orders share in different ways.

40. As no major tradition in Christian history is without its significance and truth we may recall that there is a venerable tradition which sees the episcopate and the presbyterate as two parts of one ministry which is somewhat distinct in its function and orientation from the diaconate. This tradition has been expressed in various ways such as speaking of the presbyter as priest and the bishop as high priest, or referring to the bishop as having the 'fullness of the priesthood', or saying, as St Jerome did, 'What does a bishop do that a priest does not except ordination?'. It is seen in the close similarity of ordination prayers for bishop and presbyter in some of the early ordination rites, and traces of it may be found in the similarity of the questions concerning faith and the guardianship of the faith put to both bishops and priests in the Anglican Ordinal. These are all evidences of a strong theological tradition which emphasizes what the bishop and presbyter have in common. They are the overseers, the steersmen, the teachers, the leaders in worship; all this they share in varying degrees. The deacons are the doers among the congregation who search out the needs of the laity and help to meet them, and who keep the bishop informed and in touch with what is going on.

41. If, as has recently been suggested by the Bishop of Winchester and others, we are to see the shape of the Church in the coming decades as found more and more in cells and house churches, it might be that we should think of deacons in relation to such groups—as the technologists of the groups—and of the bishops and presbyters as those who, at different levels, link the groups together in parish and diocese, sharing a ministry of oversight and direction.

42. Such a view would emphasize the sense of brotherhood and partnership which should exist between bishops and presbyters and, without adopting a completely presbyterian theology of orders, would provide a necessary counter to prelacy which can and does exist in spite of the disappearance of many of the trappings of former generations.

43. This tradition must, however, be balanced by that other equally old tradition which places the deacon in a distinct and special relationship to the bishop, if the unique position of the bishop is to be properly understood.

VII. OTHER FORMS OF MINISTRY

44. The development of other forms of ministry in the Church of England today is producing a multiplicity not unlike that which we see in the New Testament. Before discussing questions which arise about ordination in relation to this, we think it well to recall what we have written in paragraphs 8 and 9—that for the majority of Christians their ministry is exercised in living the Christian life in their family and in their job and in witnessing by the quality of their life and work, and by speech when occasion offers. We must be careful to avoid the suggestion that a person can only be a true Christian if he belongs to a house-church or a cell or group, or if he accepts some particular responsibility in the life of the congregation. There are limits on time and energy and there are also differences of temperament which make it either more or less appropriate for any particular person to be exercising a definable 'ministry' in the Christian congregation.

45. Among the various forms of ministry which exist alongside the three-fold ministry two main groupings emerge. One consists of those who receive particular gifts of God, healing, prophecy, speaking with tongues, and who may also feel themselves called to a community of life with others having similar gifts. The Renewal Movements contain a growing number of such people. There are obvious risks and problems with such movements and manifestations as there were in New Testament times, not least the danger of division and separation from the main body of church people. The criteria used by St Paul in chapters 12-14 of the First Epistle to the Corinthians are particularly relevant, and it is a special responsibility of the bishops to see that such gifts and ministries are being

used for the good of the whole body and in the mission of the church. The other grouping consists of those ministries which were called into being by the community itself and have become or are becoming a regular part of the Church's structure, performing in most cases aspects of the functions of the ordained ministry. Such are the Readers and licensed women workers.

46. Understandably it is sometimes asked whether, in view of these developments, the concept of ordination should be extended. This may in part arise from a misleading analogy between ordination and baptism. There is no real parallel between the ordained/not ordained distinction and the baptised/not baptised distinction: the former distinction is one within the Church, the latter is one between Church and non-Church. Within the Church it is not improper that the drawing of the line between ordained and not-ordained be left somewhat blurred. All baptised persons have a share in the ministry and mission of the Church, in its 'apostolate' in the broad sense of that word, so that baptism itself is a kind of ordaining. The very plurality of orders suggests that there is not a sharp distinction and that there are different functions in the Church, differentiations of ministry. Spiritual gifts are many and various and the Church needs room to reshape old offices and invent new ones to ensure that God-given abilities are fully used and actual needs fully met. But there is an element of universality about the three Holy Orders which does not attach to the other forms of ministry in anything like the same degree. The three Holy Orders are the common possession of the greater part of Christendom and the Protestant ministry of the word and sacraments is in principle linked with them. In both instances the ordained ministry acts as an articulating focus for the total life of the priestly body of the Church—the body of Christ in its universal and its congregational sense. It seems therefore more appropriate that ordination is reserved for these Orders.

47. It is not to be supposed that in this matter the Church today is facing a wholly new situation. There are parallels to be found in the variety of ministries in the early Church and in the early history of the so-called 'minor orders'. In what is still regarded by scholars as one of the fundamental works for an understanding of the doctrine of the ministry (*Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*) Dr W. H. Frere writes of *Early Forms of Ordination* and at the end of his study asks the question 'what is the conception of ordination that lies behind these services?' Two passages from his attempt at an answer are relevant at this point.

> 'The most prominent feature in the two treatises (i.e. what Frere regarded as the basis of the early Church Orders) is the strong assertion of the apostolic tradition, and of the episcopate as the sole authority that is empowered to continue the tradition. This does not however necessarily mean that the imposition of hands is itself the exclusive channel of the

spiritual grace. The view of the charismata which is taken all through, is that God gives as he pleases: and the corporate conciousness of the Church recognises those gifts wherever it sees them. It recognises the initial grace by which a man turns from heathenism: indeed it is that which leads the Church to give him the grace of baptism and the status of a Christian. It recognises in others the antecedent grace of vocation to the ministry: the evidence for this may come in various ways; partly, it may be, through some external witness to God's choice, partly, no doubt, by the man's own sense of call, but far more explicitly, so far as our authorities are concerned, by the call and election of the Church: and then it invokes upon him the consequent grace of orders, and gives him his position in the ministry, praying for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, as the elect of God, in order that he may have the needful fullness of spiritual gift.' (pp. 307, 8).

'If we attempt to summarise the position now reached, four points seem to stand out in special prominence. First it is to be noticed that all gifts of grace are given by God, including the ordinary gifts given to the believer, and the more special gifts which are given for the ministry or for the exercise of exceptional powers. Secondly, the Church takes action with regard to these gifts. In some cases it confines itself to giving a formal recognition to them, as in the case of Virgin or Healer: in others it follows up its recognition by an act of appointment to office, as in the case of Subdeacon or Reader: in others it makes a more formal recognition of the divine gift by an act of election, and then proceeds by the solemn act of ordination to invest the man whom God has called, with special graces of the ministry and with authority to act as a representative of the Body of Christ. Thirdly, it is to be observed that the local church is bound to take such action with the main stream of the apostolic tradition behind it, in order to have full approbation and acceptance. Action which is taken apart from that, cannot be accepted as action of the apostolic Church. Fourthly, this action must also be taken in union, not only with the continuous historic body, but also with the contemporaneous body, with the catholic church of the day, as represented by the bishops of the province or neighbourhood.' (p. 310).

48. As in the case of the use of priestly language about the ministry we must be careful not to be too much influenced by words. In section V above we have used the word ordination to describe the rite by which a man becomes a bishop, presbyter or deacon or, to use other terminology, a minister of the Word and Sacraments; but it should not be overlooked that the word ordination is also used in both a wider and a narrower sense. There is an Anglican custom which avoids its use in relation to deacons, preferring to speak of the 'making' of deacons, and indeed refrains also from using it in relation to bishops, preferring to speak of 'consecration'. On the other hand when the so-called minor orders existed in the Roman

Church the *Pontificale Romanum* described the method of appointment to all those orders as ordination, although the rite in no case contained a laying on of hands. It would seem to be open to the Church to devise what rites it thinks most appropriate for the admission to office in the various forms of ministry that we have been discussing in this section, and to call those rites by what names it thinks most appropriate. If the basic essentials of the traditional forms continue to be used for the ordination of bishops, presbyters and deacons, that which is important in their distinctive character will remain.

49. Nevertheless it should be recognised that to use the term 'ordination' of the appointment of Readers, Licensed Workers, etc. could bring confusion into an area where at the moment there is comparative clarity in understanding. More importantly, it could have a discouraging effect on these ministries. They have in fact their proper place in a spectrum of ministry which ranges from the 'Holy Orders' or 'Distinctive Ministry' at one end, through other permanent ministries and the more occasional and 'charismatic' ministries to the ministry of all Christian people at the other.

VIII. THE PRESIDENCY OF THE EUCHARIST

50. The presidency (or celebration) of the eucharist is a topic closely linked with ordination and ministerial responsibility, and it seems desirable to say something on the subject, although current debates make it difficult to do more than indicate certain important considerations.

51. The New Testament has little if anything to say directly on the subject, and there are differing views as to what it implies. According to one opinion the facts that the institution of the sacrament took place with the apostles alone, to whom it was said 'Do this', and that St Paul regards the supervision of the celebration of the eucharist as falling within his apostolic concern, indicate that the Lord conferred upon the apostles the duty of presiding at the eucharist as he also conferred on them the ministry of reconciliation by the charge 'Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them'. According to this view, these powers so conferred were transmitted by the apostles to their successors and so to the bishops and presbyters of today. According to another opinion the words of the Lord at the last supper, as with the ministry of reconciliation, were spoken to the disciples rather as representing the Church than as individuals. The powers were conferred immediately on the whole society and mediately on the ministers of the society who are the organs of the Body of Christ in its priestly character. Neither opinion need in fact conflict with the emphatic statement of St Ignatius at the beginning of the second century that the bishop presides at the eucharist and no other can do so without his consent. It is striking that there is no evidence for many centuries of any other than a minister (and we include the prophets of the Didache in this category) presiding at the eucharist.

52. Recent requests within the Church of England for lay presidency of the eucharist on certain occasions appear to result chiefly from two sets of circumstances. The first of these is the shortage of clergy in certain parts of England, notably in country areas, which can result in congregations being deprived of the frequency of eucharistic celebration to which they have become accustomed, or even what has come in these last hundred and fifty years to be regarded as the acceptable norm. In France, where the Roman Catholic Church faces this problem in an acute form, it is tackled by the licensing of laymen to distribute the communion (reserved from a previous celebration) within a suitable form of service. This is acceptable in some parishes in the Church of England but we doubt whether it would commend itself very widely.

53. Two other possibilities have been canvassed.

(a) That the bishop should license a layman, not merely to distribute the communion but, in the absence of a priest, to preside at the eucharist. The person chosen for this purpose might be someone who is a natural leader and pastor of the community, or a licensed reader, or some other respected layman such as those who are now in many places authorised to assist in the administration of communion. These three categories are not, of course, mutually exclusive, but neither are they necessarily mutually inclusive.

(b) That the bishop should ordain a local person with the primary duty of presiding over the eucharist. This would involve the identification of the right person, and the choice would normally fall on someone who was both acceptable to the congregation and something of a natural leader and pastor. In this context we may refer to the first of the two quotations from W. H. Frere in paragraph 47, and to the practice of the Church in early times of taking the initiative in its choice of those whom it wished to have in the ministry. No man can properly be ordained against his will steadily and firmly expressed, but a man can properly be asked by the Church to accept ordination, and must consider seriously whether that request does not in itself constitute a call from God.

54. Both these possibilities have their problems. As regards (a) it must be observed that although the possibility of *ad hoc* delegation by the bishop has been discussed by some Roman Catholic theologians[1] and *ad hoc* delegation by Conference has long been accepted by the Methodists, such an action would undoubtedly bring strong protests from some quarters in the Church of England and be a real cause of division. Even where the principle was accepted, presidency by a layman would undoubtedly be regarded as a second best and a deviation from the norm, and therefore only to be adopted when no other course was available. For many such, another course would seem to be available in the second possibility (b).

[1] e.g. *New Forms of Ministry in Christian Communities.* (Pro Mundi Vita).

55. In considering (b) we may note a passage in the Report of the Section on *The Renewal of the Church in Ministry* of the Lambeth Conference of 1968.

> 'The characteristic function delegated by the Bishop to a priest is that of presiding at the eucharist in which all Christians, intimately united with the crucified and risen Lord and with one another, are offered anew to God. In the eucharist the whole life of the Church and the world is gathered and expressed. Here, above all, we worship, we give thanks, and we intercede; here God's word is proclaimed and his reconciling love is imparted; here the Church is united, built up, and renewed for its mission to the world. In presiding at the eucharist a priest is seen as an agent of Christ, of the Church, and of the bishop; for a priest as well as a bishop is the focus and symbol of the unity in Christ of all his people. This unity of bishop, priest, and people is obscured unless the relationship between them is seen to be a continuing reality.' (p. 101).

Since the eucharist is more than just the rite of a particular community, each celebration involving in principle the whole Church, it seems clearly most fitting that the president should be one who shares in the (potentially) universal ministry. In the discussion of priestly ministry in section III above, it was suggested that it is precisely this potentially universal aspect which is characteristic of the ordained ministry, and therefore it would follow that in the event of a particular community wishing to celebrate the eucharist either it should be sent (permanently or temporarily) someone who has this universal character, or that universal character should be given to one of the community's own leaders by ordination.

56. Difficulties about this solution to the problem seem to lie in the choice and preparation of the president, since in practice he would be likely to be a nominee rather than a volunteer and extensive theological training would not be possible. The matter of choice has already been mentioned in paragraph 53 and no more need be said. The matter of training raises the question of the relationship between the word and the sacraments in ministry. To learn the outward form of the administration of the sacraments is not an arduous or a long process, though it does require some training if the administration is to be done with care, reverence and efficiency. It is to be assumed that the person chosen will already have a mature spiritual life and be generally acceptable within the local community. These qualifications would seem to be necessary even for the licensing of a layman. It is the study of scripture and doctrine which take up time and energy, and this is a necessary discipline in a preacher. But to make that a requisite for such an ordination as we are considering is to limit the ministry of the word to one of its forms. A man may be inadequate in the pulpit and yet exercise a real ministry of the word in pastoral care, in consolation, encouragement and even in teaching. The kind of natural leader whom we envisage is one who would be able

to speak the word, though not necessarily to preach it; and it should perhaps be remembered that Anglican law and practice have always envisaged that some priests might not be able to preach, though they were provided with homilies to read. The eucharistic and pastoral ministry of the natural leader might well be supplemented by the preaching ministry of a resident or visiting Reader. It will seem to many better to be somewhat flexible about the requirements for ordination than to suggest that an episcopal licence can take the place of ordination.

57. The second circumstance which has led to a request for lay presidency of the eucharist is the increasing number of small groups of Christians who wish to express their fellowship in the celebration of the sacrament. This is quite different from the first situation in which entire parishes are bereft of sacramental provisions, but itself divides into two categories.

58. The first category consists of those *ad hoc* groups of Christians, and sometimes non-Christians, who come together for a specific purpose; to do a job of work, to study the Bible, to share in meditation or intercessory prayer, etc. and wish to express their fellowship in the eucharist. Such a situation prompts the question whether this is a proper use of the eucharist. Does it not detract from the real and central place of the eucharist in the Christian Church? We recall the quotation just given from the Lambeth Conference of 1968 and its description of the eucharist. There have always been religious fellowship meals which while quite clearly related to the eucharist were yet definitely not the eucharist; and we suggest that for these particular groups the right course is either to have a fellowship meal of that kind, or to go as a body to take part in a celebration of the eucharist which involves the wider community.

59. The second category consists of those groups which are more in the nature of cells or house-churches. They are not *ad hoc* groups meeting for specific purposes; rather each is the basic unity of the Church in its area, bearing a relation to the parish in some ways analogous to that which the parish bears to the diocese. As such it is appropriate that the cell should be a eucharistic fellowship. But the question of the presidency is not thereby determined in such wise that the leader of the group, even though he be a layman, should automatically be the president. In this kind of parochial organisation, as we have suggested earlier, the parish priest, as traditionally understood, becomes a link-man between the various cells. It would seem appropriate that this link should be expressed in his presidency of the eucharist both in the individual cells and on occasions when all the cells meet together as a parish.

ERIC CICESTR:
Chairman

December 1975

Extract from GS 212, July 1974

INTRODUCTION

1. In July 1972 the Group presented to the Synod a Report on Relations with the Church of South India (GS 94) in which it was proposed that a careful and thorough theological examination should be made of what has come to be called 'The Limuru Principle' (to which we shall return later) and of the whole subject of the integration of episcopal and non-episcopal ministries. The proposal was not accepted by the Synod in consequence of an amendment proposed by the Bishop of St Albans which sought to deal with the issue of relations with the CSI in another way. Subsequent development, however, suggested to the Group that what they had proposed in 1972 would become necessary and so early in 1973 we began such a discussion among ourselves.

2. In November 1972 the Synod passed a motion proposed by Canon Welsby which, as amended, requested the Standing Committee in the light of points raised in the debate, to arrange for the preparation of a statement on the theology, sociology and psychology underlying the Church's understanding of ordination, taking account of the work already done on the subject by ACCM, other Churches, the BCC and the WCC, and giving particular attention to the widespread desire and need for a local ministry, standards of selection and training for which might be different from those required at present for full-time and auxiliary pastoral ministry. Early in 1973 the Standing Committee referred this in the first instance to the Faith and Order Advisory Group.

3. In 1972 the Group was also asked to consider the paper 'The Ordained Ministry in an Ecumenical Perspective' from the Faith and Order Department of the World Council of Churches, and spent some time on this. Comments were sent to the Anglican delegates to the Faith and Order Department. In December 1973 the Group also devoted most of a session to an examination of the Agreed Statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission on 'Ministry and Ordination'.

4. In July 1973 the Synod passed an amendment prepared by Canon Wallis which added to the motion of acceptance of the invitation issued by the United Reformed Church for what has come to be known as the 'Talks about Talks' the following words:

> 'and (iv) requests the Presidents to initiate discussions, with a view to a report to the Synod, between representatives of the different traditions within the Church of England, to enable the Synod, before committing

the Church of England to specific unity negotiations, to ascertain whether there is sufficient doctrinal agreement, particularly in respect of the ministry, to make effective negotiations with other Churches possible.'

The Standing Committee considered the membership of the FOAG sufficiently representative for it to undertake this task which clearly had relevance to the two matters already mentioned on its agenda.

It seemed at one stage as though the progress of the talks might make some report in connection with Canon Wallis's amendment essential for the Synod to consider in July 1974 and the Group has worked with that in mind. It now appears that the particular pressure of urgency is removed and indeed the Group has found difficulty in giving adequate time to such a complex issue. Nevertheless it has seemed desirable to lay before the Synod an interim paper which touches on some of the more important questions relating to the theology of ordination and the integration of ministries and this will provide a useful counterpart to the Report being presented by ACCM (GS 202). The members of the Group wish to emphasise the interim nature of this document.

Ministry in the New Testament

The New Testament contains a number of references to the organisation of Jesus' earthly ministry and of the primitive Church. It may be felt by some that this paper has taken insufficient account of these references, and the purpose of this appendix is simply to draw attention to some of the difficulties we encountered in trying to use New Testament statements as guides for present day ministry. In particular two problems are noted:

(1) The divergence of scholarly opinion concerning the accuracy, historicity and purpose of the New Testament documents.

(2) The difficulty of moving from description to prescription in matters of Church order.

1. To illustrate the exegetical problems involved in using the New Testament as a source for evidence on Church order, three subjects which seem at first sight to have some relevance have been taken at random and some of the difficulties raised by each have been indicated, together with some reference to writers supporting different views. These treatments are not exhaustive and are not intended to resolve the difficulties: the aim is simply to draw attention to the complexity of the issues and the diversity of proposed solutions.

(i) THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY (Luke 10: 1 *seq*)

Textual criticism. The very title of this section raises the first problem: the purity of the text. The number 70 is read by the RV and RSV, but the NEB and JB give 72. The latest critical text (United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament) prints 'seventy (two)', reflecting the evenness of the evidence favouring each reading. Even so, the textual commentary published as a companion to this edition carries in addition to its regular note on this variant an extra footnote from one of the editors (K. Aland) dissenting from his colleagues' compromise reading (see B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament,* 1971).

Synoptic criticism. The Mission of the Seventy is recorded only by St Luke, but part of the material appears in the charge to the Twelve in Matthew 9 and 10. Further, the reference in Luke 22. 35-38 links this material with the Twelve. The whole passage thus presents the reader squarely with the synoptic problem, i.e. the need to find an explanation for both the close literary parallels and the considerable differences both of order and content between the first three gospels. On the solution of the synoptic problem depends in no small measure our assessment of the evangelists as reporters, historians and theologians, yet the problem is as intractable as ever.

Nearly all scholars would agree with G. B. Caird (St Luke, *Pelican Commentary,* 1963) that 'no conclusion in the field of New Testament study is more certain than that Mark was the earliest Gospel writer and that the other two Evangelists used his Gospel in compiling their own'. However, the pre-critical view of the priority of Matthew still has its adherents (notably B. C. Butler, *The Originality of St Matthew,* Cambridge, 1951) and in 1964 W. R. Farmer produced a detailed critical refutation of the received view of Marcan priority which has yet to be directly answered in print (*The Synoptic Problem,* Macmillan, 1964). Even among the vast majority of writers who accept the Marcan priority, there is still widespread disagreement concerning the other sources used by St Matthew and St Luke. The fully developed documentary hypothesis of B. H. Streeter (*The Four Gospels,* Macmillan, 1924) still has a few followers (e.g. G. B. Caird, *op. cit.*), but the work of the Form Critics has rather undermined the notion of purely documentary sources, and proposed oral sources fail to give an explanation for the precise literary parallels which lie at the heart of the whole problem.

Consequently there has been a revival in recent years of the opinion that St Luke copied directly from St Matthew whose work he knew (see A. M. Farrer, *On Dispensing with 'Q',* in *Studies in the Gospels,* ed. Nineham, Blackwell, 1955; M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew,* SPCK, 1974; J. Drury, *Luke,* Fontana, 1973). Such a view requires of St Luke an apparent cavalier disregard for Matthaean order and much of its content, and still has many opponents.

The synoptic problem is clearly as wide open as ever. Much more could be said about redaction criticism, and the possible history of oral tradition; but this is impossible within the confines of this Appendix.

(ii) CHURCH ORDER IN CORINTH

St Paul's Corinthian correspondence raises a number of issues relating to Church order, of which two are here considered.

Paul's apostolic authority. Even without touching the question of the delegation of apostolic authority, the commentators find plenty of room for disagreement on the nature of that authority as viewed by Paul in relation to himself and the Corinthian church. Von Campenhausen (quoted by Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament,* Herder, 1965, p. 28) claims that 'However imperiously Paul the apostle demands a hearing for Christ . . . he nevertheless cannot simply give commands; he himself does not create the norm which would then have to be obeyed without further ado, but the community of those who possess the Spirit must rather follow him in freedom and it is to this freedom of theirs that he addresses himself'. Schnackenburg himself demurs from this view, as does L. Cerfaux: 'It cannot be affirmed more categorically that the orders

decreed by an apostle are of obligation, by divine right'. (Commenting on I Cor. 14. 37 in *The Church in the Theology of St Paul,* Herder and Herder, ET 1959, p. 254), W. Schmithals states the position thus: 'For Paul the authority of the apostle is absolute: it rests however not in the office itself but in the message which is proclaimed by the office'. (*The Office of Apostle in the Early Church,* SPCK, ET 1971, p. 40). In this he agrees with the others against von Campenhausen, but his own distinction between the office and authority of the apostle is specifically repudiated by Cerfaux (*op. cit,* p. 249).

The position of Stephanas. In I Cor. 16. 15f Paul commends the leadership of Stephanas. Farrer (*The Apostolic Ministry,* p. 147) says of this, 'There is nothing casual in the fact of Stephanas's presidency: it is not merely that he has a charitable heart, but also that his household is 'the first-fruits of Achaia'. C. K. Barrett (*A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians,* A. and C. Black, 1968, p. 394) disagrees: 'They (sc. Stephanas and his household) were not appointed by Paul; they were not appointed by the Church; in a spirit not of self-assertion but of humility they appointed themselves'. Barrett and Farrer are agreed that 'the saints' referred to in this verse are the Corinthian Christians, but J. Ruef (*Paul's First Letter to Corinth,* Pelican, 1971, p. 186) says that the passage is about the collection for the poor Christians of Jerusalem, and that it is in this limited context that Stephanas' action is mentioned. Consequently he holds that, 'This does not necessitate any kind of "emerging concept of office".' Conversely J. Hering believes that, 'We are in the presence here of the origins of the institutions of "elders" and "deacons".' (*The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians,* Epworth, 1962, p. 186).

(iii) THE FUNCTION OF TIMOTHY

Timothy is referred to in the Pastoral Epistles of which he is the addressee, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Hebrews, Romans, I and II Corinthians, the Captivity Epistles (except Ephesians) and I and II Thessalonians. Altogether he is associated with some dozen different descriptions and Christian tasks. The problem is to relate all this evidence correctly, and in this two questions are prominent: what is the relationship between these documents? and in view of the fragmentary nature of the information, how are we to use the 'argument from silence?'

The Pauline letter corpus and Acts. The date of the composition of Acts, and the value of the book as an accurate record, is still widely debated. Recent opinions on the date vary from about AD 70 to about AD 125. The earlier date is favoured by W. Neil (*Acts of the Apostles,* Century Bible, 1973), a slightly later one by W. G. Kummel (*Introduction to the New Testament,* SCM 1975, q.v. for a *résumé* of earlier opinions) and the late date is suggested by J. C. O'Neill (*The Theology of Acts in its Original Setting,* 1961) and J. Knox (in *Studies in Luke-Acts,* ed. Keck and Martyn).

The Pastorals are considered by C. K. Barrett to be post-Pauline and he sets a very tentative date of AD 90-125 for their composition (*The Pastoral Epistles,* Oxford, 1963). This is fairly representative of current opinion, but J. N. D. Kelly (*The Pastoral Epistles,* A. and C. Black, 1963) has restated the case for Pauline authorship and would date the Pastorals at AD 60-65. This spread of scholarly opinion makes any definite statement concerning the relationship of Acts and the Pastorals to letters such as Romans and Corinthians impossible. Paul describes Timothy as his fellow-worker (Rom. 16. 21), his child in Christ (I Cor. 4. 17; Phil. 2. 19), a servant of Christ (Phil. 1. 1), and—by implication—an apostle (I Thess. 2. 7), though elsewhere he distinguishes between himself as apostle and Timothy as the brother (Col. 1. 1; II Cor. 1. 1). Although clearly Paul's subordinate, Timothy comes over as a man of experience to whom delicate missions might be entrusted (e.g. I Cor. 4. 17). In the Pastorals Timothy is variously assigned to the task of evangelist, preacher, teacher, prophet, exemplar of the Christian life, resister of error, guardian of the deposit of faith, and deacon; he has on one interpretation been ordained as an elder (NEB margin) and has certainly received the laying on of hands from Paul. Yet his youth and inexperience are emphasised.

The argument from silence. Some writers assume that the earliest Church was simple, unstructured and essentially congregationalist, in contrast to a more formal organisation that developed later. E. Käsemann used the phrase 'primitive catholicism' to describe the first major stage in this development, in which 'the Word is no longer the sole criterion of the Church, but the Church is the legitimation of the Word, and the apostolic origin of the Church's ministerial office provides the guarantee of a valid proclamation'. (*New Testament Questions for Today,* ET 1969, pp. 21ff). This view he ascribes to Luke and the Pastorals and contrasts with that of Paul. H. Conzelmann (in *Studies in Luke-Acts,* ed. Keck and Martyn) gives the marks of primitive catholicism as 'the understanding of the Church as an institution of salvation, an institutional definition of the ecclesiastical office (priesthood) and the sacraments, tying the Spirit to the institution and making tradition secure through apostolic succession'. (p. 304). But he then goes on: 'All these features are lacking in Luke . . .' Setting aside their disagreement over Luke, both these writers hold that Christian documents reflecting a concern for Church order represent a move away from an earlier (and by implication purer) concept of a free Church subject only to the prophetic Word.

A second view of the matter concentrates on the Christian origins within Judaism. The early Church used the Jewish scriptures and its forms of worship can be traced back to the synagogue. (*cf.* P. Levertoff in *Liturgy and Worship,* ed. W. K. Lowther Clarke, SPCK, 1932, p. 60: 'It is a truism to say that Christianity spent its early days within the walls of the Synagogue, and that it only left it when it was forcibly expelled').

An historian of Judaism writes: 'The earliest adherents to this sect (*sc.* Christianity) were Jews in all respects but one—they regarded Jesus as the Messiah. They made no other changes . . . and to all appearances conformed in every respect to the usual Jewish observances'. (I. Epstein, *Judaism,* Pelican, 1959, p. 107; *cf.* also M. Goguel, *Les premier temps de l'Eglise,* Paris, 1949, p. 468, cited by J. Tillard in *What Priesthood has the Ministry?,* Grove Booklet, 1975, p. 10 n.l.) From this point of view the silence of Christian writings on Church order prior to the expulsion from the synagogue is explained by the fact that the existing Jewish structures were used and called for no comment. That first century Judaism was not a loose congregationalism but a closely unified international organisation is asserted by Epstein: 'Outside Judea in the places of dispersion, with their main centres in Babylon and Egypt, the Jewish communities in close relation with the Judean community in Jerusalem developed a spiritual unity, founded on the Torah and a common body of traditions, ideals, hopes and aspirations . . . This unity remained unimpaired even after the breaking up of the unity of the political world of which the Jews were part, with the destruction of the empire of Alexander the Great about 300 BC'. (*op. cit.* p. 86). In speaking of the recovery of Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, Epstein again stresses the importance of the continuing unity of world-wide Judaism, quoting by way of example the declaration of each New Moon from the Holy Land; (pp. 111f and note on pp. 119f). Fragmentary information about a figure such as Timothy is bound to be interpreted very differently according to which of these background pictures of the primitive Church is assumed.

2. A cursory reading of the New Testament reveals a variety of titles and functions, together with a number of different pictures of Church life and structure (or lack of it). Pre-critical students of scripture worked on the assumption that the texts were capable of harmonisation; the basic model to which the others were assimilated may have differed according to the ecclesiastical leanings of the writer, but the premise of a single original ideal Church was common to all. A critical view of scripture does not preclude the possibility that the New Testament Church formed an ideal model which is recoverable and ought to be followed, but neither does it demand it. Consequently some recent scholarship has concentrated on the exploration of differences between the New Testament writers, with a view to accentuating rather than harmonising the discrepancies. As a result it has been claimed that the New Testament does itself represent a plurality of views about the Church and Church order.

The New Testament is the record—partial indeed but the best we have—of the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Journeyings, healings, sermons, visions, encounters, deaths, new life, great achievements, bitter

disappointments—all are set down, and together they not only *record* the proclamation but actually *are*—for us—the proclamation of the Gospel. And inextricably bound up with this is the birth of the Church. The question is: how far can the *de*scriptions of the embryo and infant Church in the New Testament be taken as *pre*scriptions for the Church of our own day? Cyprian in the third century and Calvin in the sixteenth each attempted a straight reading of a Church Order off the pages of the New Testament: it is pertinent to ask whether such a procedure would be desirable today, even if it were possible.

Whatever picture of the New Testament Church emerges, the acceptance of a canon of scripture implies an acceptance of that picture as one fixed point to which reference must be made to test current ideas. Not to make such reference would be to cut ourselves off from our essential roots. But equally important is a recognition of the needs of the present day and also of the pattern of growth over the intervening period: without this the scriptural picture would be misleading and result in a denial of the true nature of both the New Testament and the Church as the agents for the proclamation of the Gospel to every generation.

Paras. 13-18 of GS 212 are here added as one example of the application of the New Testament.

13. There are various dimensions to the exercise of ministries. First that of mission to all mankind which gives the necessary horizon and perspective. The ministry of the apostles concerned the totality of the Christian communities. The death of the apostles did not involve an end to the apostolic mission. Secondly there is the dimension of the communion of the Churches among themselves. The apostolic ministry as a founding ministry provided a basis for the unity of the Churches and therefore the work of maintaining and building up unity in fellowship is part of the apostolic ministry. But the Churches themselves provided organs of communion by sending delegates, and among the Churches the Jerusalem community had a special calling. After the death of the apostles and the fall of Jerusalem the Churches and their local leaders assumed this service between themselves and the exchange of delegates and of letters continued to be the chief expression of it. Thirdly there is the dimension of relationships within the various communities. The responsibilities of certain individuals and the active participation of the whole community in each case are manifest in various parts of the New Testament.

14. The service of the Word is the basic function of ministry. Those sent out by Jesus were to proclaim, to teach and to witness and it remained a function of the apostolic ministry to preach, teach and witness. The ministries of prophet and teacher were obviously associated with this. Again this service is shared with the whole

community by the individuals responsible, and it is an important element in the maintenance of the common life in Christ among those who receive the Word. Here also the apostolic ministry had a special place as the foundation of the Church and its pastoral charge of watching over the Church was exercised principally in recalling the Church to the teaching which gave birth to it. But other ministries are developed to assist in the maintenance of unity, services of mutual help, of direction and presidency.

15. The sacraments are not to be seen as opposed to the Word, but rather as mediating and manifesting it.

> 'Gospel, faith and baptism are indissolubly linked together. To eat and drink at the table of the Lord is to proclaim his death until his coming again (καταγγελλειν). And the ministry of forgiveness and of reconciliation is, according to Paul, that of the Gospel (II Corinthians 5.18-21). Through having forgotten the power of the Word of God we have opposed to it that of the sacraments, whereas it is the Word which acts in them.' (*Le Ministère et les Ministères*, p. 309)

16. The terms 'servant' and 'service' are applied to all ministers and ministries in the New Testament, and it is insisted that all authority belongs to Christ as Lord and to the message which he, the living Word, has given. However, Christ's commissioned agents in ministering the word, being themselves under the authority which is both his and its, have and exercise authority: for when they bring the word to bear in teaching and discipline they act in Christ's name. The emphatic claims to authority made by Paul in particular are the measure of his complete and conscious identification with the Word entrusted to him. He knows that his apostolic authority is a reality only so far as he remains subject to the Word.

17. All ministries in the New Testament are within and exist for the Church but there seem to be different types of relationship of the community to them. In every case the primary thing is the gift or calling of God to the particular person, which may be mediated by the community, and there is also recognition by the community collectively or through its leaders. This recognition requires discernment and also may include some assignment of sphere of exercise of the gift or at least recognition that it is to be exercised in a certain area (e.g. in the case of Paul, II Cor. 10. 13-16; Gal. 2, 7-8; Rom. 15. 20). But there also comes in, in certain cases, a mandate or charge from one of the apostles or their associates and the acceptance of this by the community to whom the person is sent or within which he is to exercise ministry. In some of these the apostolic action is mentioned as taking the form of the laying on of hands.

18. It seems possible to distinguish within the New Testament three groups of ministers and ministries. There are the apostles and those

associated with them. The witness of the Twelve and those associated with them as apostles after the resurrection is the foundation of the Church, and so they exercise oversight and pastoral care by visits and by letter and hold the Churches together in unity. Then there are ministers whose service seems to be within the particular Churches, concerned with leadership and care. Such appear to have been the overseers, the elders, the deacons. Third, there are individuals within the Churches who have received a particular gift of healing, or speaking with tongues, or interpreting, and this third category may well include some who are in the other two. The same may apply to the 'prophets' and 'teachers', terms which may in some communities have signified the same ministries as 'overseer' and 'elder' in others, but also may have described particular aspects of some 'overseers' and some 'elders' and some 'apostles'. The New Testament does not see the development and diversifying of the distinctive ministry beyond the original group of leaders of the community at Jerusalem as purely the fruit of circumstances, but understands it rather in terms of the Holy Spirit being in active control at every point.

Extracts from a paper from the Diocese of Guildford

The Non-Stipendiary Ordained Ministry

A. PREFACE BY THE BISHOP OF GUILDFORD

The opportunities for witness and service by the Church of Jesus in today's world are more numerous than ever before. But, at the same time, social changes are occurring everywhere with increasing rapidity, and social and economic changes make it difficult for the Church to maintain old-established patterns of worship. Moreover, these changes, as well as the progress of science and technology, produce great uncertainty and confusion. In these circumstances people are looking with longing for clear guidance and sympathetic support, but not necessarily in the normal structures of parish life.

It is urgent, therefore, that the Churches should deepen and widen the ministry which they give in Christ's name to the world. This depends upon a deepening of concern, of faith, and of understanding by every individual Christian. It also means a strengthening of a church's own leadership, so that Christian congregations and communities may be better able to witness and to minister to people in their needs. One way to do this in our present circumstances is to recruit people for the ordained ministry who remain in secular employment. This is not a device, however, to secure ministerial help more cheaply: rather it is a development which will add a new and valuable dimension to the ordained ministry, and make the Church better able to minister effectively to all members of society.

The following regulations set out how we propose to secure this development in the diocese of Guildford, and I very much welcome the strengthening of the ordained ministry which is now possible. I hope that a significant number of people will come into this work, and that we shall as a diocese, give them a warm welcome. But, at the same time, I very much hope that offers of service will grow out of a deep concern by parochial church councils and deanery synods, as much as by individuals, to strengthen the ordained ministry. I hope also that every care will be taken to see that those who are accepted for this kind of ministry will be already—before their training—active and wholehearted leaders in the whole mission and work of the Church.

Faithful service over a number of years, in e.g., choir, Sunday school, or parochial administration, or as a Reader, is not in itself a qualification

for acceptance into training for the ordained ministry. This is not to depreciate the ministry of lay people in any way at all. All of us who belong to the body of Christ are called to witness, to care for others, to teach (in youth and children's organisations), and to take an active part in services of worship. Many many people in the diocese do this well, and there are plans in hand to develop the ministry of lay people. Teams of ministers will always include both lay people and clergy. Where then is the need for ordained men?

In ordination a person is given authority to act on behalf of the whole Church as an elder in the community. 'Take thou authority' are the words of the bishop at the moment of ordination. We can all see clearly how this works in the field of worship. There may be many people taking part in a service of Holy Communion: readers, choir, servers, sidesmen and others. It is, however, the presence of a priest, who has authority to celebrate and preside, which makes it possible for the whole group to be the Church, and not simply a group of Christians meeting together. The same is true in pastoral work and also in evangelism when undertaken by a group. The priest has, and is recognized to have, authority to represent the Church in a way which the layman has not.

Let us be clear, however, of the kind of person to whom we may give this authority. We do not simply need more 'parsons' or 'clergymen' in the conventional sense of those words; we need men and women who are wholly committed to Christ and his mission, who care for all people, who believe in the value of worship and of study, who can exercise responsibility and leadership, and who are prepared to work hard and with generous cheerfulness.

The ministry of the Church is the continuation by the Church, his Body, of the ministry of Christ. The call is his, the way of ministering is his, and the empowering is by his Spirit.

✠ DAVID GUILDFORD

B. THE PURPOSE OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

Within the total ministry of the Church, the purpose of the ordained ministry is to represent in person and in function the ministry of Christ in the Church and in the world. The minister expresses this ministry in all kinds of ways: in particular he is called:

(1) To receive insights from the world in various ways, and to share them with the people of God.

(2) To help people to witness to the insights of the Gospel in secular structures.

(3) To lead and support a congregation in worship, fellowship and service.

(4) To teach, train, and inspire in communities such as schools, hospitals, prisons, universities, and parishes.

(5) To nourish and strengthen the continuing life of the people of God.

The ordained ministry may work in a variety of ways. All ministers share the one ministry, though they may not all have the same function. Some are employed in the parochial system; others in different spheres. Some are paid wholly by the Church, and some are not.

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